Procedure for Part I: Explain that this activity focuses on resolving the difficulties that men and women sometimes have in dealing with one another, particularly in romantic relationships or in matters that involve parenting. Point out that many such problems arise because, in general, men and women communicate differently. Distribute the handout "Differences in Communication Styles." Explain some of the important differences, such as that men seek independence and status while women seek intimacy and connections with others. Ask the men whether they think the examples are correct. Emphasize that these are generalizations: not every woman or every man displays all these characteristics, and yet there do tend to be some important differences in how men and women communicate. Ask the participants which descriptions of male communication fit them particularly well and which do not. Also ask which descriptions fit the women they have been involved with and which do not.

Now explain that the group will consider how males and females might deal with problems that arise in romantic relationships. Tell the men to imagine that they write an advice column for a newspaper (such as Dear Abby or Ann Landers); their job is to help men and women who have problems in their relationships. Discuss the role: it might include supporting the person's feelings, giving relevant information, or identifying options in a difficult situation. Tell them that they will work in groups of three to five members to respond to a letter from someone who needs advice. Each small group will:

1. Select a leader, a recorder, and a reporter.
2. Read the letter, and discuss these questions:
   - What is the problem?
   - How do you think the person feels?
   - What do you think the person should do? Why?

Next, assign participants to groups, and have them select their leaders, recorders, and reporters. Then give each group one letter on an index card, and tell them they have 10 to 15 minutes to decide how to answer their letter. The recorder will write the response for the group.

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After approximately 15 minutes, reconvene the large group. Ask the reporter for each small group to read its letter and the group's response. After each report, ask for everyone's reactions or comments. After all the groups have reported, discuss the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions for Part 1

1. Which group's letter was most difficult to answer? Why?
2. In answering your group's letter, did you feel that you needed more information in order to give good advice? What additional information did you need?
3. Which relationship dilemmas in the letters were the most important? Why?
4. How did it feel to play the role of an advice giver?
5. How have you felt when *you've* made a decision about a relationship, but the other person disagreed with you? How did the situation get resolved?

Procedure for Part 2: Explain to the participants that they will now role-play one of the relationship dilemmas in order to practice taking their own advice. Ask the group which dilemma seems most difficult or most relevant to their lives. If there is no consensus about which dilemma to role-play, take a vote. Then ask the leader of the small group that responded to the selected dilemma to read the letter aloud, and have that group's reporter repeat its advice.

Now have the entire group define the appropriate roles to be played for the letter selected (for example, letter 1 has roles for a 24-year-old man and for a woman he likes who lives in his apartment building). Ask for volunteers to play the roles, with the rest of the men forming a circle around them. If volunteers are scarce, try one or more of the following: demonstrate role play with a volunteer, and then ask someone to "step into" your role; encourage men to volunteer who you know would do a good job at dramatizing the situation; flip a coin to see who gets which role (including female roles), and at the same time encourage the men to be "good sports."

Repeat that the purpose of this role playing is to practice carrying out the advice that the small groups gave. Tell the men in the outer circle to listen and observe, reminding them to give the actors support. Encourage the actors to expand each

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role play into a real-life situation, rather than just saying one line each. If necessary, suggest possible lines, or ask questions to remind the actors of the small group's advice.

Interrupt the role play when enough dialogue has taken place to allow for an analysis of the problem (or when an impasse has been reached or there is a natural break in the role play). At this point, tell the actors to end the scene and resume their own identities to discuss it. Then ask the observers the following questions:

- How did things turn out? Were you satisfied with the result? Why, or why not?
- Did the actors carry out the advice they had been given? What, if anything, did they forget to do?
- What suggestions do you have for handling the situation in a different way?

When you are sure that everyone's reactions to the role play have been expressed, ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions for Part 2

1. What can you do to learn how the other person thinks or feels in relationship dilemmas like the ones we examined? (Emphasize that men and women often have misconceptions about each other, and so it is best not to assume how women *in general* will react in any situation. This is an example of stereotyping, and it causes some of the misconceptions we are trying to avoid.)
2. When you have a difficult decision to make in a romantic relationship, where do you go for advice? How do you know whether the advice is good?
3. What's the best way to make decisions about a romantic relationship? (Review all your options and their consequences before you act.)
4. When do you know that a romantic relationship is not going to work? What do you do then?
5. As a parent, what issues do you need to consider when you are beginning or ending a romantic relationship? (Examples: How will this decision affect my children? How will it affect my partner's children?)
6. What do you do when other people seem to cause problems in your romantic relationship (such as children, grandparents, custodial parents, former partners, or wives)?

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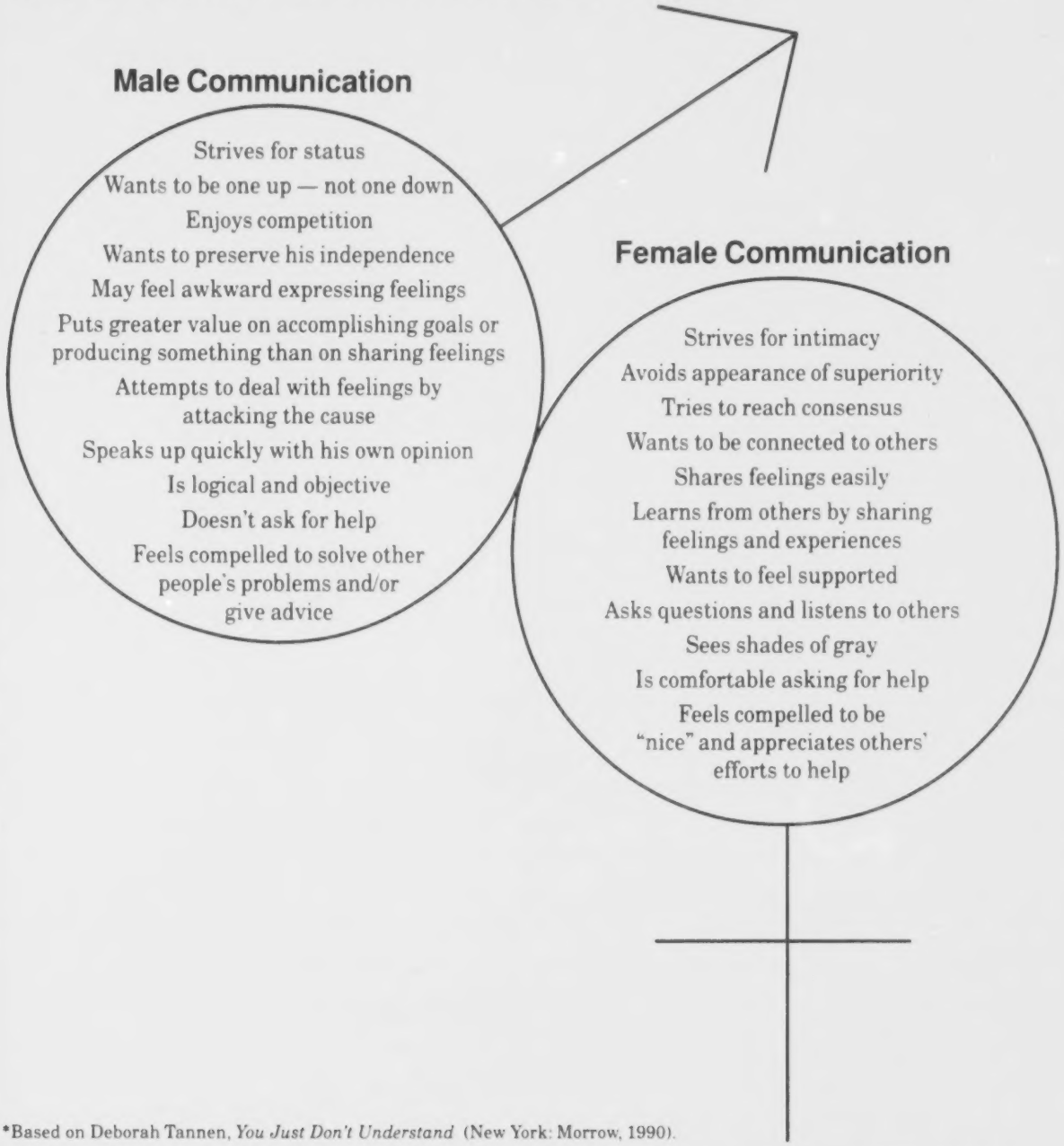
Differences in Communication Styles*


Male Communication
Strives for status
Wants to be one up — not one down
Enjoys competition
Wants to preserve his independence
May feel awkward expressing feelings
Puts greater value on accomplishing goals or producing something than on sharing feelings
Attempts to deal with feelings by attacking the cause
Speaks up quickly with his own opinion
Is logical and objective
Doesn't ask for help
Feels compelled to solve other people's problems and/or give advice
Female Communication
Strives for intimacy
Avoids appearance of superiority
Tries to reach consensus
Wants to be connected to others
Shares feelings easily
Learns from others by sharing feelings and experiences
Wants to feel supported
Asks questions and listens to others
Sees shades of gray
Is comfortable asking for help
Feels compelled to be "nice" and appreciates others' efforts to help

*Based on Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand* (New York: Morrow, 1990).

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Leader Resource

Dear Jake

Letter 1

Dear Jake:
I am a 24-year-old man. I really like a woman in my apartment building, but she doesn't seem to notice me. How can I let her know that I like her?

Shy

Letter 2

Dear Jake:
My girlfriend and I have been together for about six months. She's good to me and my son, but sometimes we seem to have trouble dealing with each other's moods. When I am joking around, she's serious. When she's full of energy, I'm tired. When I want to have sex, she's not in the mood. What can we do?

Bad Timing

Letter 3

Dear Jake:
I'm 25 and have started seeing a woman who is 35. She is a lot of fun, very mature, and easy to talk to. I like her a lot, but she is self-conscious about our age difference. One time we ran into a friend of mine who asked if she was my mother. I told him no — she's my girlfriend. But this only made matters worse. What can I tell my girlfriend to convince her that age doesn't matter when you love someone?

Younger Man

Letter 4

Dear Jake:
My girlfriend says that she loves me, but twice I've found out that she has gone out with another man. I get so jealous when I think about her with someone else. What should I do?

Jealous

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Letter 5

Dear Jake:

I have been living with my baby's mother for two years. We have our ups and downs, but things between us are OK. Sometimes I just get tired of the grind, and I guess we take each other for granted. There are a few women that I'd like to get together with, but I hadn't thought I'd ever do that. I also worry about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. What can I do to keep from feeling —

Bored at Home

Letter 6

Dear Jake:

I got married when I was 17. My wife has an attitude problem, and we fight a lot. Basically, I'm just not happy. I've started seeing another woman, and I don't really want to be bothered with my wife. Still, she is my child's mother and she is a very good mother. What should I do?

Ready to Go

Letter 7

Dear Jake:

I really like this woman I'm going out with now. She's not my child's mother, but she has always helped me out. She has a good job, so whenever I fell short of money to pay the bills, she was there for me. If I had money and she didn't, I'd give her some cash. We really had a nice arrangement. But now that we've been seeing each other for a while, she says that she can't keep helping me. I don't like her change in attitude, but I don't want to cause a problem. What should I do?

Let Down

Letter 8

Dear Jake:

My girlfriend and I have sex once in a while. We've never talked about it, but I'm worried that she might get pregnant again. I think she should use birth control, but she says that she can't find a method that works for her. What should I do?

Worried

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Letter 9

Dear Jake:
I fell in love with this great woman. At first I was really into it and thought I wanted to marry her. She definitely wants to marry me. Now I'm not so sure. I feel kind of closed in and pressured. I've started spending less time with her, and she's really angry. How can I get out of this?

Feeling Pressured

Letter 10

Dear Jake:
Sometimes women really get on my nerves. This woman I'm seeing now is such a whiner. When she has a problem with me, she whines and whines. It drives me crazy. She can never just leave something alone. How can I handle her whining?

Help

Letter 11

Dear Jake:
I am a 30-year-old divorced father with two kids. Every time I meet someone new and she finds out that I have kids, she seems to get scared and run away. What should I do about this? I have tried lying to women, but it always backfires when they find out.

Lonely Father

Letter 12

Dear Jake:
My children's mother and I have been separated for about two years now. Basically we get along fine, but every time I start dating anyone, she starts to haunt me. She'll call the house and send the kids over to get information about who I'm seeing. I think she's afraid that if I get involved with someone, I'll stop paying her child support. I want to tell her to back off, but I'm afraid she'll stop letting me see my kids. What should I do?

Confused

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Letter 13

Dear Jake:
I've been involved for about a year with a woman who has two kids. Lately, I've gotten the feeling that she's trying to get rid of me, but I still love her. More than that, I care about her kids like my own and am afraid of losing them. How can I convince her to stay with me?

Tied to Her Children

Letter 14

Dear Jake:
I've been in a pretty serious relationship with a woman for about three years, and now she wants to get married and have a family. The problem is, I already have two children, but I haven't seen them in over three years. Lately I've been thinking about finding them, but I'm afraid I'll have to start paying child support. The woman I'm with now doesn't even know that I have these kids. If I tell her, she'll probably want nothing to do with me. What do you think I should do?

Torn Apart

Letter 15

Dear Jake:
Two years ago I broke up with a woman who now says that I am the father of her 17-month-old son. She came looking for me now because she wants me to establish paternity and pay child support. In fact, I even got an order to appear in court. It's really scary to be told that I'm a father, but I don't know if this kid is really mine. And besides, why should I have to start paying for him now? I've never even seen him! What am I going to do?

Surprised

Letter 16

Dear Jake:
My girlfriend and I have two children, a boy who is five, and a girl who is three. We don't live together, but I help her out whenever I can find some work — which is scarcer all the time. Lately my girlfriend has been pressing me into legally estab-

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lishing paternity. She's afraid that if anything ever happened to her, I'd never get the kids without the legal document. I don't want to do this because I'm afraid the courts are going to come after me for child support money that I just don't have. Besides, I resent the government getting involved in my business. My girlfriend says that she wants my kids to have a "real" father, so if I don't claim them, she's going to leave me for good. Got any good suggestions?

Resistant

Letter 17

Dear Jake:

My girlfriend and I have a six-year-old daughter. Although we live together as a family, I have never established paternity because my girlfriend receives Public Assistance and won't tell them who her child's father is. I really feel bad about this, but I can't make enough money to support us, so I don't feel that I have a choice. Lately, I've tried to talk to my girlfriend about claiming my daughter, but she says that if I do anything to mess up her case, she'll never forgive me. I can't risk losing my daughter, and I really do care about my girlfriend, so I guess I don't have a choice. What would you do?

Wants to Do the Right Thing

Letter 18

Dear Jake:

Two years ago I got married for the second time, and I'm deeply in love with my new wife. Although she knew I had three children when we married, she was supportive of my need to see them and had no problem with my paying child support to their mother. (Even though we were never sure what my ex-wife used the money for.) Recently, everything changed. My ex-wife went into a drug treatment program, and I had no choice but to bring my kids to live with us. Now, everything is a mess. My wife says that she married *me*, not my kids, and is threatening to leave. I can't bear to lose her, but I have an obligation to my children. What should I do?

Afraid

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Letter 19

Dear Jake:

My children's mother and I have not lived together for the last eight months. Recently, however, I got involved in a program for fathers and have been trying to straighten out things with my kids. For the past month, I've been stopping by to see my nine-year-old son and my seven-year-old daughter. Their mother has been on her own for a while and seems happy to see me. (She says it's nice to have a man around.) The problem is that the last two times I stopped by, one thing has led to another and we ended up sleeping together. I know our relationship is over — but I can't seem to stay out of her bed. I worry about how this will affect my kids. What do you think?

Rebound

Letter 20

Dear Jake:

I left my wife a year ago because I knew I didn't love her anymore. Unfortunately, things didn't work out as I planned, and I've been pretty miserable. My teenage kids are so angry at me for leaving their mother that they won't have anything to do with me. I end up being alone most of the time, which has been no fun. About a month ago, I called my wife and asked if I could come back. I figured I could make the best of it as long as my kids talked to me again. The problem is, after being back a week, I realize I made a big mistake. I just can't love this woman. If I tell my kids I'm going to leave again, they'll never have anything to do with me. How am I going to get out of this mess? Please help!

A Big Mistake

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How Well Do You Know Your Partner?

Purpose: To have fun as the men find out how well they know their partners. To help the men think about what goes into making romantic relationships work.

Materials: Handout, "How Well Do You Know Your Partner?"; pencils (for everyone).

Time: 50-60 minutes.

Planning Note: If possible, consider telling the men to invite their partners to this session, to join in this activity. To do this, either select questions from the handout "How Well Do You Know Your Partner?" that can be answered by both men and women or create new questions. If you do invite the men's partners, establish ground rules to protect everyone. For example, tell the couples that this activity will "test" how well they know each other by asking them some *general questions* about each other's likes and dislikes. Make it clear no one should share highly personal information with the group; this activity is meant to be fun, not humiliating. Also tell the couples that if they get into any serious disagreements or hurt each other's feelings, you will have to stop them. Finally, if they think they need help in understanding and communicating with each other, offer to refer them to someone who can help.

If only a few men in the group do not have partners, they can play various roles in the activity. For example, one man can be the "host" who reads questions aloud. Someone else can be the "moderator" of the responses between the men and the women. Two others can serve as "judges," who ascertain the validity of their responses.

If a large number of the men don't have partners at this session, skip this activity. Instead, choose "Relationship Dilemmas" (Activity 11-4).

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Procedure for Men Only: If you are conducting this activity with just the men in your group, explain that you would like them to "test" themselves about how well they know their partners. (Those who do not currently have a partner can base their responses on a recent relationship that was important to them.) Ask the men to think about the following questions:

- How did you learn things about your partner?
- What kinds of information about your partner have helped you to build a good relationship?
- What kinds of information, if any, have damaged your relationship?

Ask the men whether they think that the more they know about someone, the better or stronger the relationship can be. Make the point that getting to know a woman means finding out things that are important to her, including her likes and dislikes, her opinions, and her beliefs. Then give the men approximately 10 minutes to read through the handout "How Well Do You Know Your Partner?" Instruct them to put a check mark next to all the questions that they can answer. (If they want to, they can write the answer next to each question. If reading is difficult for some, you can read the questions aloud.) After they finish, tell them to add up how many answers they think they know. Then ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions for Men Only

1. How easy was it for you to answer these questions?
2. Which questions were hard for you to answer?
3. If your partner had to answer these questions about you, how well do you think she would do?
4. How important do you think it is to know these things about your partner? What else is important to know about your partner in order to have a good relationship?

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5. If you asked your partner to give you the answers to these questions, which ones would be hard to discuss? Why? Which ones would be easy to discuss? Why? How would you go about asking the hard questions?
6. How easy or hard is it for you to accept the things that you know about your partner? If you don't like certain things about her, do you put up with them? Do you leave? Do you try to change her?
7. What are some ways that people in a romantic relationship can get to know each other better? (Examples: making a point to spend time together; asking questions that show you are interested; sharing opinions about things; having common interests so that you have things to talk about.)
8. When you are thinking about getting involved in a romantic relationship, what kinds of things do you look for in the other person? What things turn you off about a potential partner?

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Procedure for Men and Women: If the men have invited their partners to this session, ask the men to sit on one side of the room and the women to sit on the other. Assure both groups that they will have an opportunity to ask each other questions. Tell them that first you will read a question that all the men will try to answer, and explain that anyone can "pass" if he does not want to answer. After the men have responded, you then will ask their partners whether each man answered the question correctly. If not, each woman can then decide whether she wants to tell her partner the correct answer. Repeat the process, this time reading a question to the women. Continue reading questions to each group for approximately 15 minutes. Then ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions for Men and Women

1. How easy was it for all of you to answer these questions?
2. Which questions were hard for you to answer?
3. How surprised were you by the amount of information that your partner knows about you?
4. What else is important to know about your partner in order to have a good relationship?
5. How easy or hard is it for you to accept the things that you know about your partner? If you don't like certain things about your partner, do you put up with them? Do you leave? Do you try to change your partner?
6. What are some ways that people in a romantic relationship can get to know each other better? (Examples: making a point to spend time together; asking questions that show you are interested; sharing opinions about things; having common interests so that you have things to talk about.)
7. What role does being a parent play in making your relationships work? (For example, how likely is it that you will try to stay together for the sake of the children?)

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How Well Do You Know Your Partner?

Even if you live with your partner and spend hours talking with her every day, it's still a good bet that there is a lot about her that you don't know. To make a relationship work, you need to take time to *truly* get to know your partner. You need to know her likes and dislikes as well as her opinions and her beliefs. Knowing or wanting to find out about her shows that you truly care.

The following questions will give you an idea of how much — or how little — you know about the person with whom you're involved. If you get more than 45 questions right, it means you truly know your partner. If you get from 35 to 45 right, not bad — but try to pay a little more attention. And if you can answer only 35 questions or less, you need a crash course in partnerships!

1. What's her middle name? _____
2. How much does she weigh? _____
3. Who is her favorite musician? _____
4. What's her favorite color? _____
5. What's her favorite food? _____
6. If she could go away on a trip, where would she go? _____
7. If she could have any job in the world, what would she like to do? _____
8. How many rings does she wear? _____
9. Whose pictures does she carry in her wallet? _____
10. When is her birthday? _____
11. What astrological sign is she? _____
12. If she could only watch one TV show a week, what would she watch? _____
13. What would she rather do: go to a movie, go dancing, or go to a party at a friend's house? _____
14. How many children does she want? _____
15. If she had $1,000, what would she do with the money? _____
16. If she could live anywhere in the world, where would she live? _____

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HANDOUT

Session 11
Activity 5

17. What's the last thing she read: a newspaper, a magazine, or a book?

18. Where did she go to school as a kid?

19. Who is her best friend?

20. Who was her first boyfriend?

21. If she had to talk with somebody about a problem, who would it be?

22. What size shoe does she wear?

23. If you were to buy her a gift, what would she want?

24. Where were her grandparents born?

25. What religion is she?

26. Does she sleep on her right side, left side, back, or stomach?

27. Where does she get her hair cut?

28. When, if ever, was she in the hospital?

29. What's her favorite outfit?

30. What's the last movie she saw?

31. Who is her favorite actor?

32. What was her nickname as a kid?

33. What's the one thing you do that gets her really mad?

34. Which does she prefer: a bath or a shower?

35. Is she registered to vote?

36. How many children does she have?

37. Who is the father of her children (or fathers, if more than one)?

38. How often does her children's father (or fathers) visit the kids?

39. How would she describe your child's mother (or former girlfriend)?

40. In what ways would she say you are different from her former partner?

41. What word would her friends use to describe her: shy, outgoing, funny, independent?

42. Who is the last person she had a fight with?

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43. What was the last thing she bought for herself? _____

_____

44. If she were to exercise, would she rather walk, swim, ride a bike, or run? _____

45. What's one thing that she is really afraid of? _____

46. What's one thing that she is really proud of? _____

47. If she were stranded on a desert island and could have three people for company, which people would she choose? _____

_____

_____

48. Who is her role model? _____

_____

49. If she could change one thing about her body, what would she change?

_____

50. Where on her body is she most ticklish? _____

51. If she had to say one thing that she likes about herself, what would she say? _____

52. If she could change one thing about you, what would she change?

_____

53. Would she describe your relationship with her family as being good, bad, or neutral? _____

54. Would she describe your relationship with your child's grandparents as being good, bad, or neutral?

_____

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Women Speak Out

Purpose: To identify what some women look for in a relationship and what attitudes they have about men. To offer the men an opportunity to communicate with women and exchange views about male-female relationships.

Materials: Extra chairs (for guest panel); handout, "Sample Questions for Women"; newsprint and marker.

Time: 70-90 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity is an alternative to the session's other activities; in particular, it repeats much of "What Works, and What Gets in the Way?" (Activity 11-2). Although it requires preparation in advance, it is well worth the effort. Contact four or five women who are outgoing and are willing to talk in front of a group of men. Be sure to recruit women who reflect the group's racial and cultural composition and who are close in age to the men. It is useful to include one or two married women. Ask the fathers to recruit some of their women friends or relatives but *not their romantic partners.*

Ask the women to join your group for about an hour and a half to discuss their attitudes and feelings about relationships, dating, marriage, and what they look for in a man. Choose women who do not mind answering personal questions, and give them advance copies of the handout "Sample Questions for Women."

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Procedure: Remind the group that you have invited a panel of women to join them in talking about male-female relationships. In particular, you would like the women to share with the group their views about relationships, dating, marriage, and what they look for in a man. Distribute copies of the handout "Sample Questions for Women." Tell the men to pick a question to ask, and encourage them to think of additional questions.

Introduce each woman (or have her introduce herself) to the group. Explain that the guest panel will take turns answering questions in an informal manner. Emphasize that both the men and the panel should feel free to raise any questions or make comments but that no one has to answer any question that feels too personal. Remind the group members to be respectful of everyone's opinions and right to privacy.

After the panel and the men have explored a number of questions, tell the whole group that you want to take a few minutes to discuss what goes wrong in relationships between men and women. Ask the participants to evaluate what they think is good about today's relationships and what they would like to change. Next, brainstorm for responses to the question "What makes it difficult for men and women to have successful relationships with each other?" Draw a line down the middle of a sheet of newsprint, and on the left side list the group's responses. Then ask the group to brainstorm about the question "What can men and women do to build good relationships?" When both lists are complete, use the following questions to help the group assess their responses.

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▼ Discussion Questions

1. Which of the problems on our list have you experienced in a romantic relationship?
2. What do you think causes such problems? Is one partner or the other always at fault? Or do both partners share responsibility for their problems?
3. Do women and men usually see these problems in the same way or differently? If differently, how? (Emphasize that even though generalizations can be misleading, men and women do tend to experience the world in different ways and to have different styles of communicating. For example, most women have been socialized to talk about and express feelings, whereas most men have been discouraged from expressing emotions, particularly in public, and particularly among other men. Ask the group for examples of situations in which they responded to something in a particularly "male" or "female" way.)
4. Which of the things on our list that build good relationships between women and men have been present in your relationships?
5. Do most good romantic relationships have something in common? If so, what? Do relationships that go bad have something in common? If so, what?
6. How likely is it that someone's previous romantic relationships will "get in the way" of a new relationship? How does this happen? What can a person do to prevent it from happening?
7. What role do your children play in your romantic relationships? Do children "get in the way"? Or do they help build a relationship? What can you do to prevent the problems that children might cause?
8. How do prior obligations get in the way of romantic relationships? (Consider such things as financial or custodial obligations to your children, and personal obligations to family, friends, employers, etc.)
9. How important is equality in male-female relationships?

End the activity by asking both the fathers and the guest panel to suggest ways to improve relationships between men and women. Thank the women for their participation.

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Sample Questions for Women

1. Tell us a little about yourself — your name, your age, what you do with your time, whether you are married, and whether you have any children.

2. What characteristics do you look for in the men you date? (If you're married, what did you look for when you were dating?)

3. What traits or behaviors do you really like in men? What traits or behaviors really turn you off?

4. What do you like to do when you go out with a man?

5. What financial expectations do you have of the men you date?

6. What plans do you have for your future? For example, will you continue working? Go back to school? Have (more) children?

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7. How easy is it to communicate openly with men? Which topics are easier to discuss? Harder? What happens when you discuss topics that you disagree about with a man? ✍

8. Do you think it's possible for a man and a woman to be just friends? Or does romance always enter the picture? ✍

9. What are the biggest problems that women face in their relationships with men? ✍

10. Who do you think should be more responsible for using birth control — the man or the woman? ✍

11. How would you feel about a man who insisted on using a condom? What about a man who refused to use one? ✍

12. Are you married? If not, do you plan to get married? What feelings would you have about marrying a man who already has a child? ✍

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13. What characteristics do you look for in a man you might want to marry? In a man you might want to have a child with? ✎

14. How much say should a man have in whether the couple have children? Avoid having children? ✎

15. How important is it for you to feel that you have equal power in a relationship with a man? ✎

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Feedback/Wrap-up

End the session by asking each participant to state one thing he learned today. Ask the following questions to discuss today's session.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. In general, what are your reactions to today's session? What was helpful? What wasn't?
2. What is one thing you heard today that you believe may be helpful in your romantic relationships?
3. *(If the women are present)* Can some of you (both men and women) please talk about what you learned about each other from your exchange today?
4. Do you plan to share any advice or comments from today's session with your partner? If so, what particular ideas do you plan to share?

Remind the participants (and guests, if they are present) that all relationships require hard work and a commitment to being open and honest with each other. Wish them all luck in their relationships, and thank everybody for their participation.

Tell the peer group members that Session 12 will focus on ways by which men deal with anger and resolve conflict. Ask the men to prepare for the session by thinking about the times when they get really angry and about how they express their anger. Remind them of when the next session will meet.

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Managing Conflict and Handling Anger

Activity 12-1	**What's New?**	☞ 10-15 minutes
Activity 12-2	**Why Do We Get So Mad at Each Other?**	☞ 15-20 minutes
Activity 12-3	**The Aggression Volcano**	
	or	
Activity 12-4	**Recognizing Anger Clues**	☞ 30-35 minutes
Activity 12-5	**"Keeping Your Cool"**	☞ 25-35 minutes
Activity 12-6	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ 10-15 minutes

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Key Concepts

- Conflicts are normal; they arise in all relationships. When people have conflicts in their relationships, they often become angry with one another.
- Anger is an emotion that is normal and natural throughout life. When people get angry, they need to find acceptable ways to deal with it.
- Violence in relationships — using physical force to injure or abuse — is an unacceptable, illegal way to express anger. Expressing anger through violent behavior usually has negative consequences.
- Understanding and recognizing the causes of stress can keep a person from "exploding" or acting self-destructively.
- Learning to recognize anger "clues" reduces the buildup of emotion that can lead to violent behavior.
- People can use various strategies to resolve conflicts without turning to violence.

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Materials Checklist

Activity 12-2 Why Do We Get So Mad at Each Other?

- ❑ Handout, "Conflict Inventory"
- ❑ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity 12-3 The Aggression Volcano

- ❑ Handouts, "Stress Reduction Tips," "Case Studies: Stress Situations," and "The Aggression Volcano"
- ❑ Newsprint
- ❑ Marker

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Activity 12-4 Recognizing Anger Clues

- ❑ Handout, "Understanding Anger Signals and Behavior"
- ❑ Pencils (for everyone)
- ❑ Newsprint
- ❑ Marker

Activity 12-5 "Keeping Your Cool"

- ❑ Leader Resource, "Keeping Your Cool"
- ❑ Handout, "Anger Management Skills"

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Planning Note: This session on "Managing Conflict and Handling Anger" is very important for the men in the peer support group. It is likely that many of them have had difficulty expressing anger appropriately and may even have become abusive at some time in their lives. It also is likely that they have experienced violence in their families and communities or through contact with police. As the men discuss situations that have been stressful or volatile, they may need help managing the anger that gets stirred up. Remind the group of the ground rules concerning violence, and at all times help the participants to maintain control.

One way to keep the session productive is to use a timekeeper and limit each man's speaking to 5 or 10 minutes. (You could also have each man schedule his time, writing his name and how long he will speak on newsprint — again using a timekeeper to monitor things.) Limiting and scheduling the time that each father speaks can keep the men from becoming overwhelmed by their situations and may help prevent blowups. Time limits also keep everyone from speaking at the same time, which helps to maintain order. Finally, you can ask the men for their cooperation, recognizing that it may be hard for them to "keep their cool." Emphasize the importance of giving everyone a chance to speak, and remind them of the need to stick to the group's rules about violence or threats of violence.

It may be helpful to invite organizations that specialize in conflict management or alternatives to violence to assist you in planning or leading this session. If it appears that any of the fathers are having extreme difficulty dealing with anger in their relationships, arrange to provide follow-up for them after the group, and refer them to the case manager or whoever is responsible for counseling services.

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"Keeping Your Cool" (Activity 12-5) gives the men an opportunity to learn and practice nonviolent ways to resolve conflict and manage anger, and it is crucial that ample time be set aside for this. If you do not have at least 90 minutes to conduct today's session, you may have to omit "Why Do We Get So Mad at Each Other?" (Activity 12-2) and select either "The Aggression Volcano" (Activity 12-3) or "Recognizing Anger Clues" (Activity 12-4) for use with "Keeping Your Cool" (with 10 to 15 minutes left for "Feedback/Wrap-up"). An alternative is to extend the time for this session to allow you to cover all the activities. However, it is not a good idea to end this session without giving the men an opportunity to learn new ways to handle their anger.

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What's New?

Planning Note: Tailor the following questions to ask the fathers about specific ideas and skills that they reviewed in Session 11 concerning male-female relationships.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody please summarize what we talked about last time?
2. What part of last week's discussion of male-female relationships had the greatest impact on you? Why?
3. What, if anything, did you learn about women?
4. Did you talk about the last session with any women in your life? What was the conversation like?
5. What insights did you gain from the last session that may improve your relationships with women?

Did you try any of last week's suggestions about how to improve relationships between men and women? If so, which did you try? How did they work?

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Why Do We Get So Mad at Each Other?

Purpose: To help each father identify the sources of conflicts between himself and the mother of his children.

Materials: Handout, "Conflict Inventory"; pencils (for everyone).

Time: 15-20 minutes.

Planning Note: Use this activity if most of the fathers have some contact with their children's mother. Those who do not have contact may either respond to the checklist based on problems that arose when they *did* have contact (which may help them reflect on what went wrong) or anticipate what might cause conflict if they do reestablish contact. Since most of the fathers probably have had some contact with the mother of their children, this activity should help them evaluate what went wrong in their efforts to get along.

In conducting this activity, it is important to emphasize how *children* are affected when their parents have conflict over issues relating to them. If most of the fathers *do not* have contact with their children's mother, start this session with "The Aggression Volcano" (Activity 12-3).

Procedure: Explain that today's session deals with sources of conflict in men's lives and ways to resolve conflicts nonviolently. This first activity requires the fathers to identify situations that cause conflicts in their relationship with their children's mother. Begin by saying that there are different levels of conflict. Then make the following points in your own words:

- Conflict in and of itself is OK. Conflicts can help us learn things about ourselves and others.
- Any two people will sometimes disagree, and everyone feels anger at times. However, some relationships have too much conflict. If two people argue most of the time, it's a sign of serious problems in their relationship.

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- Violence never improves a relationship; violence destroys a relationship.
- Some people cross an important line when they get angry; they become violent.

Distribute the handout "Conflict Inventory." Tell each participant to put check marks next to the types of conflicts he has had with his children's mother and to add any unlisted situations under the heading "Other Conflicts." Spend a few minutes discussing the participants' responses.

Ask for volunteers to describe one personal experience of a conflict situation with their children's mother. What happened as a result of the conflict? (Was there a verbal argument, a fist fight, a breaking off of communication?) Exactly how did the father *feel* as a result of this conflict?

Discuss the activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Conflict is usually caused by both parties. What part do you play in creating conflicts with your children's mother? What part does she play?
2. How does your status as a noncustodial father contribute to conflicts with your children's mother? (For example, pressure to pay child support, limited visitation rights, interference from grandparents, etc.)
3. How do these conflict situations affect your children? What do your children learn from watching you and their mother deal with conflicts?
4. What kinds of conflicts have you had with bosses or other coworkers? How have you handled these conflicts?
5. What other "red-flag" situations (or people) get you angry or cause conflict in your life?

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Conflict Inventory

I have conflicts with my children's mother when . . .

___ **1.** We disagree about how to discipline our children.
___ **2.** She disagrees with how I think things should be done.
___ **3.** I want to visit my children more often than she likes.
___ **4.** She feels that I should pay more child support.
___ **5.** I bring my girlfriend around her or my children.
___ **6.** She dates other men.
___ **7.** I challenge the influence of her parents over the care of my children.
___ **8.** Her mother or father criticizes and disrespects me.
___ **9.** I hang out with my friends.
___ **10.** I date other women.
___ **11.** We don't communicate on a regular basis.
___ **12.** I fall behind on my child support payments.
___ **13.** I show up late to visit my kids.
___ **14.** I don't bring my kids back at the time she wants me to.
___ **15.** I question how she spends the money I give her.
___ **16.** She tells my kids things about me that I don't like.
___ **17.** I drink or use drugs around my children.
___ **18.** I show up without letting her know that I'm coming to visit my children.
___ **19.** I move in with a new girlfriend.
___ **20.** I tell my kids things about her that she doesn't like.

Other Conflicts (Fill in the blanks):

___ **21.** _____

___ **22.** _____

___ **23.** _____

___ **24.** _____

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The Aggression Volcano

Purpose: To develop an understanding of how stress is caused and how stress affects our behavior and our life.

Materials: Handouts, "Case Studies: Stress Situations" and "The Aggression Volcano"; Leader Resource, "Stress Reduction Tips"; newsprint and marker.

Time: 30-35 minutes.

Planning Note: Write the following on newsprint, and post it at the beginning of the activity:

- **Stress:** Physical, mental, or emotional tensions that can arise in response to a wide variety of things, including things that happen in daily life.
- **Stressors:** Whatever happens that causes stress. *Internal stressors* come from inside (such as wanting desperately to get a job). *External stressors* come from outside (such as finding out that your child is very sick).

Copy the diagram from the handout "The Aggression Volcano" on newsprint, to be posted later.

This activity requires the men to recall situations in which their anger was out of control. Reliving these situations may generate renewed anger at the persons who upset them. If any participant is visibly upset, stop the activity, ask him to discuss what is upsetting him, acknowledge how hard this is, and spend a few minutes helping him deal with his anger. If necessary, tell the participant that you will talk with him after the session, and refer him to the appropriate person for counseling. Remind the entire group that today's last activity will give suggestions for managing anger.

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Procedure: Begin by explaining the newsprint definitions of *stress* and *stressors.* Ask the group, "Is there anyone here who has never felt stressed?" Expect that most of the men have experienced some form of stress. Then ask the following questions: "Have any of you felt at times that you were under stress because you are a noncustodial father? What are some examples of such stressors?" List all responses on newsprint (and expect comments like these):

- Dealing with child support enforcement is hard.
- Raising children takes money.
- Dealing with my children's mother is no picnic.
- Everyone expects too much of me.
- I'm worried about the next man she'll be with.
- Jobs that pay enough to support my kids are hard to find.
- I want to spend more time with my kids but I can't.

Distribute the handout "Case Studies: Stress Situations." Select at least three case studies to discuss with the men, helping them to identify the stressors in each situation. Read aloud each case study before discussing it, and then ask the following questions:

- How do you feel about this situation?
- How real is this situation?
- What stress is this guy feeling?
- How is he handling his stress?
- Do you think his behavior is reasonable or not? Why?

The discussion of case studies should take approximately 20 to 25 minutes. Then say something like, "We have seen that a number of things can cause us to feel stress. The case studies showed how stressors can build up to a point where they cloud our judgment and can even make us explode."

Now, post the drawing of "The Aggression Volcano." Ask someone to describe a volcano and how it works. Direct the group to the bottom of the drawing, where the first level is simple *stress.* Point out that the buildup of stress and anxiety can result in what is called *multiple stress* (second level from bottom). Multiple stress happens

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when *more than one thing is causing strain or tension* in your life. (For example, maybe you lose your job, get put out of your apartment, and break up with your girlfriend all in the same week.)

The middle level of stress is *physical problems*, such as headaches, backaches, ulcers, and high blood pressure. The next-higher level is called *overload stress*, which can cause drinking, drugging, and irritability. (Give examples of irritability, such as slamming doors, or "cursing out" everyone who comes near you.)

Ask the men, "With all that buildup, what do you think is going to happen?" (Look for comments like "blow up" or "explode.")

Then say, "A person is now at the top of the volcano, at the *aggression peak*." Ask the men, "What do you think happens when someone reaches the aggression peak?" (Responses should include extreme anger, jealousy, suicide, abandoning the family, child or partner abuse, drinking, and drugging.)

Explain that such responses at the aggression peak come about when people don't have ways to deal with stress as it is building up. Give each participant a copy of the handout "The Aggression Volcano." Ask each father to think about a recent situation in which he may have reached (or was near) the aggression peak. When everyone has a situation in mind, ask the men to start at the bottom of the Aggression Volcano and to work upward, identifying the stressors they felt at each level. Instruct them to write down next to each level of the Aggression Volcano what happened, who was involved, and what they were feeling.

When everyone has finished, ask for volunteers to share their experiences with the group. As the volunteer tracks his progress through the Aggression Volcano, ask participants to suggest different ways that he might have handled his problem and reduced his stress at each level. Remind the group to be supportive of the father who is sharing his experiences; urge the men to offer constructive suggestions.

Lead the group in a discussion of ways to prevent and reduce stress, listing all comments on newsprint. Remind the fathers that there are ways to *prevent* stress from building up in the first place, as well as ways to *reduce* stress after they are "stressed out." Give each participant a copy of the handout "Stress Reduction Tips" to suggest ways to prevent or reduce stress and to avoid the aggression peak. Close the activity by asking each participant to state one thing he has learned about stress.

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Stress Reduction Tips

To *prevent* stress:

- Eat right.
- Get enough sleep.
- Exercise regularly.
- Listen to music.
- Take time out to visit friends, have fun, and relax.
- Pay attention to how things affect you. (For example, listen to your body's signals when you start to get upset.)
- Identify the things that are truly important, and focus on them (for example, your children, your family, friends).
- Talk with someone about any problems you have; deal with problems early.

To *reduce* stress:

- Identify what's bothering you.
- Think about possible ways that you can react and about their possible consequences.
- Take deep breaths, and think about something pleasant.
- Do deep muscle relaxation exercise (squeeze large muscles — such as shoulders — for a count of 10, then release).
- Exercise to work off steam.
- Take a walk to clear your head.
- Talk about your problems with someone.

To *avoid* the aggression peak:

- Find someone who can help you regain control (such as your best friend, a family member, or a counselor).
- Leave the situation (take time out) before you do something you'll regret.
- Find a safe place to cool down.
- Take deep breaths while counting to 10.
- Seek help.

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Case Studies: **Stress Situations**

SITUATION 1: Joe has recently lost his job and has just been told by his girlfriend, Anna, that she is pregnant. He immediately says to her, "I thought you were taking the pill or something." An argument starts, and Joe, in a burst of emotion, slaps Anna and storms out of the house. He then sees a man run into an alley after being chased by the police. An officer in a patrol car pulls up beside Joe and asks, "Hey, did you just see somebody run down that alley?" Joe ignores the officer and keeps walking. The officer then says, "Hey, man, didn't you hear me?" Joe then responds, "I ain't seen no damn body!" The officer gets out of the patrol car and yells: "Stop! You want to curse me, huh? I'll show you something. Put your hands up against the wall, and spread your legs." After frisking Joe, the police officer handcuffs him and takes him to the station.

SITUATION 2: Tico lives in Los Angeles, California. He is 22 and has just become a father. He is with his girlfriend, Helena, visiting the baby when four of his friends drop by her house. They yell: "Hey, Tico, come on, man. Let's go hang out. You don't need to be taking care of no baby, man. Come on! What are you, a chump, man?" Helena tells Tico to ignore his friends and asks him to stay with her and the baby as he is supposed to. Tico says: "Look, I know this is my baby, but don't expect me to be hanging around here all the time. I'm still young and still like to hang with my friends. In fact, that's what I'm going to do." Tico grabs his coat and heads for the door. Helena asks him where he is going and when he will be back. Tico responds: "Don't ask me where I'm going. Just because you had my baby, don't think you control me."

SITUATION 3: Fred is a responsible guy. He is doing well in a training program for auto mechanics, which he expects to finish in about two months. His father died recently, and because Fred is the oldest in his household, he feels a lot of pressure to care for his mother and two younger brothers. Fred begins to miss school and eventually drops out to take a job hauling trash, but wishes he could earn more money. At night, Fred has a lot of trouble sleeping. One day he goes to work an hour

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late. His supervisor comes down real hard on him about being late, which Fred believes is unnecessary. An argument starts, and soon Fred and his supervisor are shoving each other. Feeling he is losing this pushing match, Fred picks up a brick and hits his supervisor on the head, knocking him out. Someone calls the police, and Fred is arrested for assault and battery.

SITUATION 4: Elliot has two children from two different relationships. He is living with his younger child, three-year-old Nicki, and her mother. He only occasionally sees his nine-year-old son, Kenneth; the boy has refused to visit him for three years because of Elliot's serious problem with drugs. For the past year, Elliot has been struggling to pay child support for his two kids. Since meeting Nicki's mom, though, he has been working hard to stay sober. He attends meets of AA and NA a few nights each week, and yet he still thinks a lot about getting high. He has also been doing seasonal work as a roofer, but work is slow right now. Recently, Elliot got a letter demanding that he appear in court to answer an old summons from the days when he was getting high. In court, he was told that he would have to pay a $500 fine or spend two months in prison, and he was given two weeks to come up with the money. Elliot left the court and headed straight for a liquor store, where he bought a bottle of bourbon.

SITUATION 5: Carl lives with his five-year-old daughter and her mother, Sheri. He has been working to support his family, but the work isn't steady and pays only the minimum wage. For years Carl had been "hustling" drugs, but he stopped after he met Sheri. He says that he'll "take the short dollar that's long on peace of mind, rather than the long dollar that's short on safety." Although he often sees the guys he used to hang with, Carl tries hard to avoid them, because he doesn't want to be lured back into the "trade." His mother recently got very sick, and they weren't sure that she would live. Carl felt obligated to help out, and so he let his three younger sisters move in with him. With all the extra mouths he now has to feed, he has been looking for a second job, but hasn't had any luck. He has been staying away from home more and more, because he can't stand being around all the kids. He has also been worried about his mother, so he has had little sleep and hardly any food in the past week. One day Carl bumps into a guy he knows who asks if he wants to get in on a drug deal. Carl figures, "just this one time, to get me out of the hole," and he agrees to do it.

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HANDOUT

Session	12
Activity	3

SITUATION 6: Curt is a 36-year-old divorced father of three children: Bobby, 12; Nicole, 9; and Dave, 7. Two months ago, Curt came home from work and found the locks on his door changed and his clothes packed in boxes, stacked near the front door. After numerous efforts to contact his wife, he learned from his neighbor that she had moved in with a man she met at work. Although Curt was furious at his wife, he was most upset about losing the kids. He decided to go to court to try to gain custody. At the court appearance, his wife showed up with her new boyfriend. When the judge asked the kids which parent they wanted to live with, they chose to stay with their mother. Curt felt so betrayed and hurt that he stormed out of the courtroom, saying, "To hell with the kids! I don't want them anyway!" Since then, Curt has refused to visit his children, saying that if they don't want to live with him, they can forget about spending time with him.

SITUATION 7: For three years, Henry has been separated from his wife and two children, six-year-old Stacy and four-year-old Henry, Jr. Until recently, he sent his wife money about once a month, depending on how much work he had as a construction worker. During this time, he usually visited the kids once or twice a month, which also depended on how much work he got, because he didn't like to see them when he didn't have money to spend. This arrangement worked fine between Henry and his wife, until he lost his job two months ago. Now his wife calls him and nags him for money. Although she threatened to bring him to court for child support payments, Henry didn't think she'd go that far. But this morning, when Henry answered his doorbell, he was handed a subpoena to appear in court because of arrears in child support payments. Henry can't believe that his wife would do this to him. He gets in his car, races to her house, and when she doesn't answer her door, he smashes her window. Ten minutes later, Henry is arrested and dragged off to jail.

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HANDOUT

Session 12
Activity 3

SITUATION 8: Joe lives with his girlfriend, Rosa, and their three children: Tavia, 11; Joe, Jr., 8; and Therese, 6 months. Joe and Rosa have been together for fifteen years, ever since they met in high school. They love each other, and yet they have their ups and downs. One big problem is Joe's temper. He is usually the nicest guy around, but when things build up inside him, he's like a volcano that eventually explodes. The problem is that when he explodes, he usually ends up hitting Rosa. Last week, he was really stressed out. Work was slow and money was tight. The baby cried nearly every night because of infection, and Joe didn't get much sleep. So today, when Rosa woke him for work and said that they didn't have any coffee, he lost it. Rosa ended up with a black eye, and this time says she's had enough. Joe feels sorry for hitting Rosa, and he promises once more that it will never happen again. But Rosa thinks to herself, "I've heard all this before."

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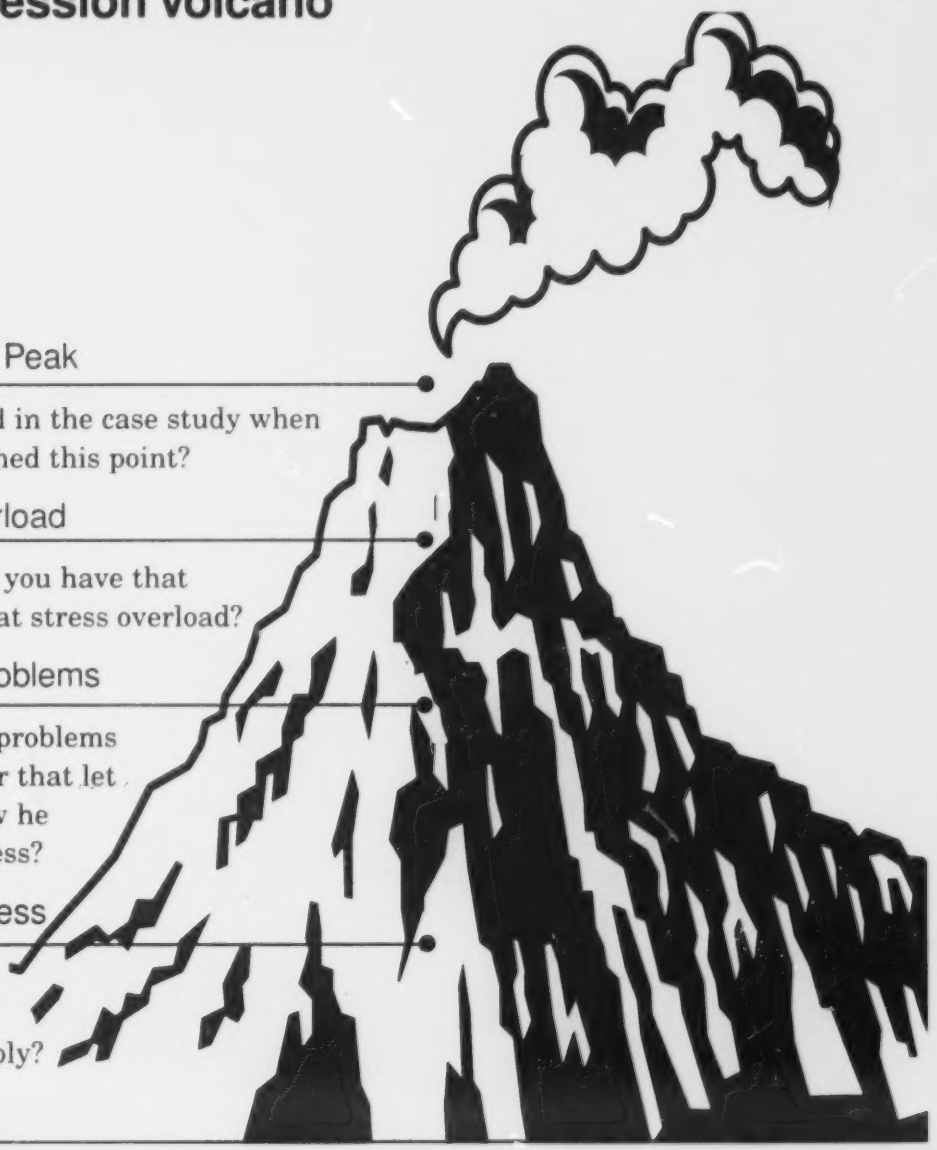
The Aggression Volcano



5. Aggression Peak

What happened in the case study when the father reached this point?

4. Stress Overload

What signs did you have that the father was at stress overload?

3. Physical Problems

What physical problems began to appear that let the father know he had a lot of stress?

2. Multiple Stress

What were the problems that began to multiply?

1. Stress

What was the first sign of stress?

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Recognizing Anger Clues

Purpose: To help participants identify their anger styles and the clues for recognizing their feelings of anger.

Materials: Handout, "Understanding Anger Signals and Behavior"; pencils (for everyone); newsprint and marker.

Time: 30-35 minutes.

Planning Note: Write the following information on newsprint in preparation for this activity:*

Definitions:

- Anger is an *emotion.*
- Violence is a *behavior* that can express an emotion (usually anger).

Levels of Anger

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(Very low level) (Very high level)

Bugged	Upset	Enraged
Annoyed	Mad	Exploding
Bothered	Agitated	Furious

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

*Adapted from Daniel Jan Sonkin and Michael Durphy, *Learning to Live Without Violence* (Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 1989).

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Procedure: Remind the men that in Activity 12-2 they identified situations that cause conflict between them and their children's mother. Explain that the next activity will help them better understand how they show anger in various situations.

Start the activity by asking, "What is the difference between anger and violence?" Record all comments on newsprint, and then share and compare the men's definitions with those you have already prepared (see the Planning Note). In your own words, make the following points:

- Anger is a feeling that is natural and normal.
- If properly controlled, anger can be a constructive emotion. (For example, anger can cause a person to act assertively to reach a worthwhile goal.)
- When anger is not controlled, it can lead to violent behavior.
- Violence is an aggressive reaction — mostly physical — that almost always has a *negative impact* on oneself, other people, and the environment (for example, breaking something, yelling, hitting, shooting a gun).
- The first step in learning to control anger is to *recognize when you are feeling it.*

Ask, "What are the first signs that you get when you're angry?" Explain that our bodies give us anger signals, or clues, in the form of tension — in the chest, arms, legs, face, head, neck, or stomach. Make it clear that anger can lead to cold sweats, a pounding heart, and faster breathing than normal.

Distribute the handout "Understanding Anger Signals and Behavior." Ask the men to choose one of the situations from Activity 1-2 that makes them extremely angry. Encourage participants to close their eyes and visualize the conflict situation with their children's mother (or, if they prefer, to think of someone else who makes them very angry). Push them to recall how they felt at the time. Then have them complete the handout by listing what they were feeling at the time of the conflict and how they typically behave when they are angry. Allow five minutes to complete the handout.

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Ask for volunteers to share their responses, beginning with body signals that indicate anger. Then review the "Levels of Anger" scale that you have prepared on newsprint. Ask each father to place himself somewhere on the scale, based on the situation he described on the handout. Indicate that research shows that most men tend to be aware of only the higher levels of anger, from level 5 through level 10. Many men are good at ignoring low-level anger (levels 1 through 4). Emphasize that most people don't think of level 1 as anger but, rather, as annoyance or irritation; however, it is anger. Tell the group that recognizing lower levels of anger is important in preventing an emotional buildup that can lead to violent behavior.

Discuss the activity by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What was this activity like for you? What, if anything, did you gain from it?
2. How well do you think you are doing in your ability to manage anger? What works for you? What goes wrong in the way you handle your anger?
3. How have other people described you when you are angry? (If some men say that they have been described as "deadly" or "violent," ask how they feel about such labels. If necessary, take a few minutes to discuss how boys are sometimes socialized to think they are "macho" when people are afraid of them. Ask the men what happened in situations when they *had* to appear deadly and dangerous. How do such labels limit their opportunities? How would they feel if their sons were given such a label?)
4. What would you like to change about the way you express anger?
5. As a man, what other feelings have caused you trouble? For example, how do you react when you have experienced loss? When you are hurt, disappointed, or lonely?

Summarize the activity by saying something like, "We have discussed various aspects of anger that lead to violence. Each of us must recognize our own anger clues, which include both body and behavior signals. The next activity will help you learn to manage your anger — to keep it from progressing to higher levels or exploding into violence."

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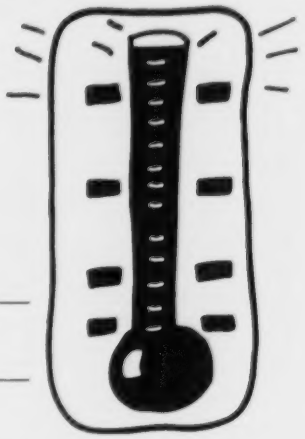
Understanding Anger Signals and Behavior

How Does Your Body Signal Anger?



Recall a conflict situation that made you angry. Picture what happened. How did your body feel at the time of the conflict? Can you feel any of those body signals right now? List four signals that your body gives you when you are feeling angry:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

What Do You Do When You Are Angry?

How do you behave when you are feeling angry? List four ways that you express your anger.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

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"Keeping Your Cool"

Purpose: To enable the participants to practice ways of resolving conflicts and managing anger without violence.

Materials: Leader Resource, "Keeping Your Cool"; handout, "Anger Management Skills."

Time: 25-35 minutes.

Planning Note: Decide in advance on a situation from the Leader Resource to model for the group. Enlist the support of someone to role-play the situation with you, and rehearse in advance.

Cut apart the situations on the Leader Resource, and make strips to be distributed. If time is limited, choose only one situation, and ask for volunteers to take part in the role play.

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Procedure: Tell the participants that they are going to role-play typical situations that might occur with people in their lives, and that they will have to truly immerse themselves in the roles of the characters. Explain that they will work in small groups to plan the role play, and then will perform it for the whole group.

First, review the handout "Anger Management Skills," taking time to explain any strategies that the participants don't fully understand. Then model the skills in a short role play, and ask the group to critique your portrayal of the anger management skills.

Next, divide the participants into small groups. Hand out a situation to each group, and tell the groups that they have approximately 10 minutes to plan a brief role play. Each group should persuade volunteers to play roles, and the other men in the group should suggest lines and help the actors rehearse. The actors should concentrate on expressing the *feelings* of the characters.

After 10 minutes of planning, ask each group to perform. Begin each role play by reading the situation. After each role play, ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How well did the man in the role play manage his anger?
2. What strategies did he use to manage his anger?
3. What were the consequences of his behavior?
4. What could have been done to prevent the conflict from occurring?
5. How would you handle this situation in real life?

Conclude the activity by saying something like, "We have seen that there are many ways to resolve potentially violent situations. 'Keeping your cool' and taking the time to think through difficult situations will enable you to maintain healthy relationships with those people who are important to you."

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Leader Resource

"Keeping Your Cool"

SITUATION 1: CURTIS AND DEBBIE. Curtis and Debbie used to go together. They have a three-year-old son, Jamal, who lives with Debbie and her parents. Curtis and Debbie have been arguing a lot lately. On a recent visit to pick up Jamal for the weekend, Curtis found that Debbie's new boyfriend, Chip, was there waiting to take Debbie out. Chip and Curtis have known each other since childhood, and they never got along that well. While Curtis was waiting for Jamal to be changed, Debbie's father came in and said hello to Chip but not to Curtis. This really agitated Curtis. To make matters worse, Jamal came into the room and hugged Chip before he hugged Curtis. Now Curtis was furious, believing that Debbie had been "bad-mouthing" him to her family and to Jamal.

Act out this situation so that Curtis manages his anger in a healthy way.

SITUATION 2: DARRYL AND HIS DAD. Darryl is a 17-year-old single father who works at a fast-food restaurant. His girlfriend, Nina, was killed a year ago in a drive-by shooting, so Darryl is raising his daughter, Tiffany, with the help of his parents. Darryl would like to make more money so that he and Tiffany can move into their own apartment, because his parents are always nagging him and telling him what to do. Today Darryl woke up late and ran out of the house so he wouldn't be late for work. After he settled down on the bus, he realized that he had forgotten to take the trash out the night before — even though his father had reminded him twice. By the time Darryl got home that evening he was really disgusted, because his supervisor had lectured him all morning (in spite of rushing, he was still late). As soon as Darryl walked in the door, his father started in on him about the trash, cursing at him and calling him a "pitiful case" of a man. This really pushed Darryl over the edge.

Role-play this situation so that Darryl manages his anger in a healthy way.

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SITUATION 3: LINDA AND MIKE. It's Friday night, and Linda and Mike are out on their second date. They're at a friend's party, sitting on the couch listening to music. Linda notices Paul — a guy from her neighborhood — and she smiles. Paul walks over, says "Hi," and gives Linda a kiss on the cheek. Paul says, "Did you hear about the block party next weekend?" Linda says, "Yes, I'm planning to come with my daughter." Paul says, "Great. I'll see you there." When Linda turns back to Mike, she notices that he looks angry. When she asks him what's wrong, he says, "Let's get out of here." Linda says, "Why, Mike? The party's just starting. What's wrong with you?" Mike stands up and pushes Linda into the next room where the coats are. They are the only two people in the room. Very angrily Mike says, "You've got to learn how to be with me. Nobody disrespects me that way."

Act out this situation so that Mike expresses his feelings without violence.

SITUATION 4: VANESSA AND KEVIN. Vanessa has been with her boyfriend, Kevin, for a few years. They live together with their son, Milton. Kevin is very easy-going. He doesn't like to argue, so he usually ignores Vanessa when she gets angry. Today Kevin has fallen asleep in front of the TV, and Vanessa pokes him to wake him up. Kevin looks around confused and says, "Hey, what's wrong?" Vanessa starts screaming, "You are so boring. Why don't we go out and do something?" Kevin says calmly, "Vanessa, I'm tired. You go out if you want to. I'll watch Milton." Vanessa says, "Oh no. I don't want to go out alone. Come on. Get off your tired butt. You act like you're an old man." Kevin just ignores her. He's heard all this before. Vanessa gets in his face again, and this time she smacks him. Now Kevin is really angry.

Act out this situation so that Kevin manages his anger in an appropriate way.

SITUATION 5: BILL AND THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE. Bill is a 26-year-old father who's been looking for work for several weeks with no success. On a recent trip to the employment service, Bill had to stand in line for a long time. After waiting more than an hour, he noticed that a guy near the front of the line let someone cut in front of him. Bill got very annoyed but let it pass. About two minutes later, someone else near the front of the line did the same thing. Bill was furious.

Role-play this situation so that Bill handles the problem without causing a scene.

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SITUATION 6: JAMES AND HIS BOSS. For three years James has been a maintenance worker in a housing project. He has always had a good employment record and has rarely been out of work. Last month James's infant son died of SIDS ("crib death"), and James took off three days for the funeral. After returning to the job, he would work for 10 hours straight, then rush home to take care of his wife and two-year-old daughter, because his wife was so depressed.

Each day James was getting more and more tired, but he felt as though he couldn't stop and that he would explode if he had to deal with one more thing. Today at work the boss told James that he was going to have to be laid off because the city had cut the budget for the Housing Authority. James just looked at his boss and then punched a hole in the wall.

Act out this situation so that James handles his pain better.

SITUATION 7: THOMAS AND STACY. Thomas and Stacy have been separated for about eight months — since Thomas came home and found Stacy in bed with some guy. Although Thomas tried hard to get custody, his seven-year-old daughter, Tanya, and his four-year-old son, Thomas, Jr., live with their mother. (The judge turned Thomas down because he had been arrested for drunk driving.) At first, whenever Thomas called to see whether he could visit the kids, Stacy refused, saying that she didn't "trust" him to bring the children back. Thomas then went back to court to get the judge to enforce his visitation rights, which helped things for a while. But recently Thomas lost his job, so he has been behind on his child support payments. He's feeling really bummed out, because he has no idea where he's going to find another job. It is Friday night, and Thomas has gone to Stacy's to pick up the kids. Stacy comes to the door and tells him, "They're not here. They went to my mother's." Thomas is absolutely beside himself: He wants to kill this lady.

Role-play this situation so that Thomas handles his anger appropriately.

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SITUATION 8: MIGUEL AND HIS SON, DAVID. For nine months, Miguel has had "unofficial" custody of his eight-year-old son, David. He agreed to take care of his son because David's mother needed to enter a drug rehab program. Miguel works nights so that he can keep house during the day and be there when David gets home from school. Miguel's mother stays with David at night, while Miguel is at work. Taking care of David has been a big responsibility for Miguel. David was really attached to his mother, and so he has been angry and depressed since she left. Miguel hardly ever sees his girlfriend, Maria, because David doesn't like her. Because Miguel cares about David so much, he believes that all his sacrifices are worth it.

This morning, when Miguel came home from work, he got a call from David's school, asking where the boy has been. The truant officer said that David had not been at school all week. When Miguel called his mother, she said that David had left for school every morning and that, as far as she knew, he had gone to school every day. That afternoon, when David walked in the door, Miguel threatened to hit him.

Role-play this situation so that Miguel keeps his cool.

SITUATION 9: PAUL AND HIS WIFE, MARY. Paul is a 33-year-old father who has a history of domestic violence. He recently completed a six-month treatment program to help him deal with his anger without becoming violent. Tonight, Paul's wife, Mary, went out with his friends, and when she got home, she wouldn't tell him where she had been. Paul has suspected that Mary has been having an affair. As they began to argue, Paul felt his anger increasing. He became incredibly angry with Mary, and yet he was also really scared that he would lose control.

Role-play the situation so that Paul manages his anger and confronts Mary without using violence.

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Anger Management Skills*

Level 1-2-3 Anger

- Try to recognize your feelings before they escalate.
- Express your feelings directly — say how you feel and what you want.
- Take a five-minute break or a short walk. Come back and talk about it.

Level 4-5-6 Anger

- Evaluate the situation before expressing anger verbally. Is this the time and place to do it?
- If yes, say how you feel and what you want.
- If no, take a time-out.

Level 7-8-9-10 Anger

- Take a time-out.

Three Steps for Making Time-Outs Work

1. Make a statement about how you're feeling and what you're going to do.

You begin by talking about yourself, and talking about yourself immediately puts you in charge of yourself. You aren't name-calling or blaming.

- I'm beginning to feel angry/pissed off, upset.

  You are talking about how you feel. It's a direct communication. There is nothing unclear about this statement. Saying you feel angry may in fact make you feel less angry. Try it; you'll like it!

- I need to take a time-out/get away for a while.

  This is another "I" statement. You are also saying to the person that you are not going to get violent; instead, you're going to do something else — take a time-out.

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2. Get away and cool off.

Leave for a set amount of time — at least an hour. If you stay away for at least an hour, you and the other person should be sufficiently cooled off by the time you return.

- Don't drink, use drugs, or drive.

  Drinking and drugs will only make the situation worse. Don't drive, because there are already enough angry people on the roads!

- Do something physical.

  Going for a walk, playing some ball, or riding your bicycle will help discharge some of the angry tension in your body.

3. Come back and express your feelings calmly.

- Come back when you said you would.

  If you agree to come back in an hour — or the next day — live up to your agreement. It helps to build trust.

- Check in — talk about what it was that made you angry.

  If you do no more than show up, you've completed the exercise. If you go on to talk about what it was that made you angry, you get experience and practice in communicating and discussing emotional issues.

*Adapted from Daniel Jan Sonkin and Michael Durphy, *Learning to Live Without Violence* (Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 1989).

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Feedback/Wrap-up

Begin by asking the men to state something they got out of today's session. In particular, ask the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody like to tell us what he thought about today's session?
2. Has anybody learned any new ways to resolve potentially violent situations? If so, what did you learn?
3. Do you think that the things you learned today will work in your life? Why, or why not?
4. How helpful was today's session to you personally? Why do you think so?
5. Can someone give an example of how you can use today's information in teaching your children how to handle their anger?

Tell the men that even though today's information can help them handle their lives better, it takes time to change behavior. Ask whether anyone can think of a situation in his life in which a past behavior did change. For example, you can ask them to fill in the blanks, using the following statement:

"I used to _____ , but now I _____ ."

Remind the men that they can control their lives if they work at it, but that sometimes they will have to ask for help — particularly when they are feeling angry, stressed out, or out of control. Reinforce the idea of taking time-outs as a way to avoid violence.

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Session 13

Handling Anger and Conflict on the Job

Activity 13-1	What's New?	☞ 10-15 minutes
Activity 13-2	My Work History	☞ 15-20 minutes
Activity 13-3	The Price of Losing Control	☞ 25-30 minutes
Activity 13-4	Strategies for Handling Conflict	☞ 30-40 minutes
Activity 13-5	Feedback/Wrap-up	☞ 10-15 minutes

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Key Concepts

- Conflict on the job is as normal and expected as conflict in relationships. As in relationships, it is important to manage workplace conflicts effectively and to control anger about job situations.
- The first step in managing workplace conflict is understanding the sources of anger, such as frustration, not getting respect, feeling taken advantage of, not liking the job, not knowing what's expected, and fear of failure.
- Angry people often act in ways that get them fired, or they quit, when there might have been ways to resolve the situation. A second step toward managing conflict on the job is developing self-control — for example, with "cooling off" techniques.
- Following workplace rules and taking direction from supervisors are situations in which men sometimes experience disrespect (even when it is not intended or might be corrected). To keep their jobs, men need to learn how to get along with supervisors and coworkers they don't like, without giving up their self-respect.

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Materials Checklist

Activity 13-2 My Work History

- ❑ Handout, "My Employment Record"
- ❑ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity 13-3 The Price of Losing Control

- ❑ Newsprint
- ❑ Marker

Activity 13-4 Strategies for Handling Conflict

- ❑ Leader Resource, "Case Studies: Anger on the Job"
- ❑ Handout, "Strategies for Handling Conflict"
- ❑ Newsprint
- ❑ Marker

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Planning Note: This session follows up the previous one, moving the discussion from conflicts in personal relationships to conflicts in the workplace. Again, the goal is to assist the men in identifying strategies to control anger — in this case, to keep their jobs. The facilitator's task is to help the men analyze their feelings and behavior relating to work conflicts.

As always, avoid "preaching," focusing instead on the skills the men need to control anger and keep their jobs. As the men report their experiences, call the group's attention to the similarities in their situations. For some, a one-time confrontation at work led to explosive anger that cost them their jobs; others underwent a "slow burn" — a steady buildup of anger and frustration — until the situation became unbearable and they quit. Help them identify patterns that are self-defeating and strategies for handling job situations (some of which may arise from discrimination, racism, cultural and class differences, etc.).

Before conducting this session, review the list of strategies to prevent and reduce stress, found in Session 12, Activity 12-3.

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What's New?

Planning Note: Tailor the following questions so that you're asking the fathers about specific ideas and skills that they reviewed in Session 12.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody please tell the group what we talked about in the last session?
2. What part of last week's discussion about managing conflict and handling anger had the greatest impact on you? Why?
3. What, if anything, did you learn about yourself last week?
4. Did you talk about the last session with anyone you fight with a lot? What was the conversation like?
5. What insights did you gain that may improve your relationships with people who are important to you?
6. Did you try any of last week's suggestions for handling anger without violence? If so, which suggestions did you try? How did they work?

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My Work History

Purpose: To explore the participants' work histories, identifying what they liked and disliked about the jobs they have held — and what conflicts they may have had on the job.

Materials: Handout, "My Employment Record"; pencils (for everyone).

Time: 15-20 minutes.

Procedure: Remind the men that in previous sessions they discussed sources of conflicts in their relationships with their children, children's mother, family members, and friends. Tell them that today's session will concentrate on their work experiences, focusing on conflicts the men may have had with employers, coworkers, and customers. Say something like, "We are going to start today's session by thinking about the different jobs that each of you has held. Then we'll draw on the skills you learned for managing conflict and handling anger in order to identify ways to handle work problems without losing your job."

Distribute the handout "My Employment Record," asking the men to complete it in about 5 minutes. In the blanks provided, each participant should list the different jobs he has held (any and all jobs) and the reasons why he left each job. (If anyone has difficulty reading, explain the headings on the handouts.) You may want to conduct this activity by pairing the men and having them interview each other (verbally) about their various jobs. (Match readers with nonreaders) When everyone has completed the handouts, tell the men to circle the jobs they liked best and to cross out the jobs they liked least.

Note: The men in your group may have completed similar résumés or employment records during their participation in an employment program. If so, acknowledge the repetition of this activity, but point out that it will serve a different purpose in this session.

When everyone is ready, ask the following questions to discuss the men's work histories.

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▼ Discussion Questions

1. How many jobs did you list on your Employment Record?
2. Which jobs did you like best? Why? (Did you like your boss? The kind of work you did? The job setting? The pay?)
3. Which jobs did you like least? Why? (Was the job boring? Too demanding? Demeaning or underpaid? Did you hate your boss or hate having to work?)
4. In general, what reasons did you give for leaving most of your jobs? (For example, were you laid off, fired, replaced by someone else, or hurt? Or did you quit?)
5. What patterns, if any, do you see in your job histories? (For example, did you have the same job for a long period of time? Did you move a lot from job to job? Were there large gaps in your employment history? Did you leave jobs because of conflicts with your boss or coworkers? Did you lose jobs because of situations you believe were created by discrimination?)
6. What makes it hard for you to get and keep jobs?
7. What, if anything, would you like to change about your work habits?

Tell the men that the next activity will ask them to describe in detail a work conflict with an employer or coworker or customer that resulted in their losing a job or nearly losing one.

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My Employment Record

Age When Held Jobs	Job Positions	Reasons for Leaving
Under 18	1. _____	1. _____
	2. _____	2. _____
18-21 years old	1. _____	1. _____
	2. _____	2. _____
	3. _____	3. _____
22-25 years old	1. _____	1. _____
	2. _____	2. _____
	3. _____	3. _____

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HANDOUT

Session 13
Activity 2

Age When Held Jobs		Job Positions		Reasons for Leaving
26-29 years old	1.	_____	1.	_____
	2.	_____	2.	_____
	3.	_____	3.	_____
30-35 years old	1.	_____	1.	_____
	2.	_____	2.	_____
	3.	_____	3.	_____
Over 35	1.	_____	1.	_____
	2.	_____	2.	_____
	3.	_____	3.	_____

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The Price of Losing Control

Purpose: To help participants identify the kinds of work-related problems that may have caused them to lose their jobs.

Materials: Newsprint and marker.

Time: 20-30 minutes.

Planning Note: Write the following on newsprint, and post it in front of the room.

- Describe the situation that made you angry on the job.
- What did your boss/supervisor/coworker/customer want from you?
- How did this person let you know what was wanted or expected from you?
- What did you see as the problem?
- What exactly did you say and do?
- How did the other person respond?
- What was the result of the conflict?
- What feelings did this conflict raise in you? (Did you feel embarrassed, stupid, relieved, powerless, defeated?)
- Were you more angry or less angry after the conflict?
- How did this situation affect your personal life?
- Did this kind of situation happen more than once? If so, when else has it happened?

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Procedure: Say something like: "You've just had an opportunity to talk about all the jobs you've had and what they were like. In the last session, we learned that conflict and anger are normal but that problems occur when we lose control or resort to violence. Now I'd like each of you to think of a work situation that made you angry with someone. Think of a situation where you really messed up or things got out of hand. I'm going to ask for volunteers to talk about such situations with the group. Then we'll use these questions to help us understand what happened." (Read aloud the questions that you've posted on newsprint.)

Ask for volunteers to share their individual stories. Try to get each of the men to describe one situation, and focus in detail on five to seven situations. Use the questions on newsprint to guide the men's responses. Encourage the men to tell plausible stories about what happened when they lost control. Use the examples given after each question as *probes* to help the men open up about how they may have lost a job by losing control.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. In general, what kinds of situations got most of you angry?

   (For example, was it usually something the boss asked you to do? Or was it *how* he or she asked? Was it the fact that you didn't like the job? Was your anger related to how others treated you? Was it an issue of discrimination? Was it a problem of communication between you and your boss because of racial or ethnic differences? Was it a male-female conflict? Was this an issue of how someone handled authority or how you reacted to authority?)

2. How did most of you handle your anger?

   (Did most of you just quit? Did you start a physical fight or become verbally abusive? Did you have a chance to defend your position? Did you handle your anger at work, or did you take it out on your children, your partners, or yourselves?)

3. How did most of these conflicts end?

   (Did most of you lose the job? Were you able to resolve the conflict without being fired? Did you feel that the situation was handled fairly? If not, why not?)

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4. Do you usually respond in the same way to everyone who makes you angry, regardless of who the person is? If so, what is your usual response? If not, what things do you consider when deciding how you will respond to someone who makes you angry?

   (For example, if you like the job, do you try harder to keep your cool? Do you respond differently when you have financial pressures? When you have a lot of stress in your personal life, do you tend to lose your cool more quickly? Do you respond differently to female supervisors than to male supervisors? Do you blow up more quickly when you are angry at a coworker than when you are angry at your boss?)

5. What role does disrespect play in the problems that you have had as a worker?

   (For example, do you get angry about being disrespected at work? Has anger ever cost you your job? Is it hard for you to deal with other people telling you what to do? Is it hard for you to get along with people who are different from you?)

6. How does stress in your personal life interfere with your ability to keep your job?

   (For example, does too much personal stress make you want to quit your job because you feel that you can't cope?)

7. Which of your own characteristics or personal traits influence how people treat you as a worker?

   (For example, does your level of education, skill, sex, race, or age affect how you are treated by employers, supervisors, coworkers, customers?)

8. What things have worked well for you when responding to people who make you angry at work?

9. In the last session, about handling conflict and managing anger, we talked a lot about strategies for "keeping your cool." Which of these ideas do you think would work best when you get angry or have a conflict at work?

   (If necessary, remind the men of the strategies listed in the handout for Activity 12-5, "Anger Management Skills." Emphasize such strategies as avoiding conflict when possible, taking a time-out until people cool down, expressing how you feel about the situation, and saying what you would like to see happen.)

Tell the men that next they will role-play some of the situations they have just discussed. The role play will help them identify ways to handle anger and conflict without losing their jobs — or their self-respect.

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Strategies for Handling Conflict

Purpose: To help participants deal with conflicts at work by identifying strategies that allow them to stay in control.

Materials: Leader Resource, "Case Studies: Anger on the Job"; Handout, "Strategies for Handling Conflict"; newsprint and markers.

Time: 30-40 minutes.

Planning Note: This activity will help the men identify ways to cope with anger and conflict at work so that they do not jeopardize their jobs. The men will be asked to role-play the work-related conflicts that they identified in Activity 13-3. Choose situations to role-play that represent a variety of conflicts (such as one involving a female boss, one where the issue was discrimination, etc.). Also, select situations that reflect both one-time conflicts and conflicts in which anger built up over a long time. The Leader Resource "Case Studies: Anger on the Job" provides situations that you can use if the men's stories do not provide enough variety.

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Procedure: Say something like, "I am going to ask for volunteers to role-play some of the situations you described about job-related conflicts. The role plays will help us figure out some ways to deal with anger without risking your job."

Divide the participants into small groups, and assign each group one of the situations from Activity 13-3 or from the Leader Resource (do not let anyone role-play his own situation). Give the men approximately 10 minutes to plan a brief role play in which they identify strategies that the worker can use to handle anger without losing control. Tell the men that in planning their role plays they should consider all the reasons why the worker was angry as well as how he could control his anger without losing self-respect. Tell them also to consider whether it is best to walk away from this conflict or whether the conflict really is unacceptable and must be faced. Give the small groups about 10 minutes to come up with suggestions for how the worker can deal with his anger and to select actors to play the roles.

Reconvene the large group, and begin the role plays. After each role play, ask the actors why they chose the strategies they used. Then ask the person whose situation was reenacted to comment on the strategies the actors used. After each role play, ask the entire group:

- What are your reactions to how the worker in the role play managed his anger?
- What strategies did this worker use?
- Do you think these strategies would work in real life? Why or why not?
- How would *you* feel using the strategies shown by the actors? Why?
- How might the real-life worker benefit if he used the strategies suggested by the actors?

After all the role plays, ask the following questions to continue the discussion about managing anger at work.

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▼ Discussion Questions

1. What were some of the ideas that came up in the role plays about how to handle conflicts at work? (List these suggestions on newsprint for everyone to see.)
2. Can anyone think of other strategies that people can use when they are angry on the job? (Examples: taking time out instead of exploding; delaying a response until everyone is calmer; avoiding conflicts that may get out of hand; asking exactly what is expected of you in advance; requesting a meeting with a third party, such as a mediator or supervisor; talking with a friend or partner about what makes you angry about your boss or coworker; asking for help with difficult tasks *before* a problem arises; deciding in advance how you will deal with a difficult boss or coworker so that you are ready to handle the situation if it comes up.)
3. Which conflicts on the job seem hardest to deal with? (For example, is it harder to handle anger that builds up over time? Or is it harder to handle spur-of-the-moment anger?)
4. Are the strategies for dealing with a one-time conflict on the job the same as the strategies for managing the day-to-day frustrations of a job that takes advantage of you? Which strategies help with daily frustration? Which help with one-time conflicts?
5. How do conflicts with customers differ from conflicts with bosses or coworkers? What are some ways to handle conflicts with customers? (Examples: excuse yourself and ask a coworker to handle a customer; walk away until you feel calmer; tell the customer to speak with a supervisor or manager about the problem.)
6. Has anyone faced a situation in which none of these strategies would work? If so, describe the situation? What choices did you have? (Discuss situations in which the only choice may be to leave the job.)
7. Is it possible for men to control their anger — maybe even walk away from a conflict — without losing self-respect? If so, how?

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8. What role does "attitude" play in how you deal with anger at work? For example, if you are in a good mood, do things bother you less? If you are working at a particular job that is temporary, dc you have more tolerance? If you dislike your boss, is it harder to maintain your cool?
9. What are some things you can do to control situations that make you upset? (Examples: take care of yourself by getting enough sleep, eating right, and exercising so that you lower your stress; identify what you like and dislike about your job so that you can prevent conflicts from arising; ask your boss or supervisor to clarify what is expected of you; leave your job problems at work so that they don't interfere with the rest of your life; make an effort to be a reliable, productive employee so that you feel good about your work.)
10. Ask the men to think about the time that they have spent together in the peer support group. What have they learned about themselves from their discussions of manhood, communication, and relationships? What have they learned about how they can deal with conflicts at work?

Ask each of them to fill in the following blanks: "I used to deal with my anger at work by _____, but now I plan to _____ _____."

After the men have answered the questions, give each of them the handout "Strategies for Handling Conflict." Tell them that it summarizes today's session and that it may be helpful to keep the handout somewhere at work, to use if the need arises. They can also discuss this handout with family members and friends.

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Leader Resource

Case Studies: **Anger on the Job**

SITUATION 1. You are a postal worker who sorts mail on the night shift. A female supervisor has been on your case for the past few months, complaining that you are not working fast enough. You've just taken a break after sorting mail for three hours, and she comes up to you and says that *she* is the one who decides when you take a break. She demands that you go back to work and threatens to write you up for slacking off. What do you do?

SITUATION 2. You are a clerk in the mail room of a law firm. You usually work the dayshift, and you get along well with your supervisor and coworkers. Now your boss says that he needs you to cover the evening shift for about three weeks because one of the workers is having minor surgery. You agree, figuring that it will look good on your record. On your first evening shift, you sense that your new supervisor doesn't like you, but you don't pay much attention to him. Before the shift is over, your supervisor has accused you of being "lazy" and "slow." You sense that he is attacking you because of your race, but you've also heard him talk this way to other people. When you show up for work the next day, he takes one look at you and says, "Hey, useless is back." What do you do?

SITUATION 3. You are working on a demolition team that is tearing down an abandoned building. For three days in a row, the foreman has come to the job site and told you to stop what you were doing and go get coffee and donuts for the crew's morning break. You are fed up with this "gopher" work, and you vow that the next time you're going to tell the foreman where to get off. You know that he decides which guys to lay off when things get slow, but you've had enough of him. What do you do?

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SITUATION 4. In your factory job, you are responsible for keeping the machinery running. You don't like the job, but you were out of work for two years before getting it, so you know you've got to keep it, no matter what. One guy you work with has been giving you a hard time ever since you started working there. You don't know what his problem is, but you've decided to stay clear of him. Things at home have been rough lately, too. Your son has been in and out of the hospital with high fevers that the doctors can't figure out, and the boy's mother has been taking her worries out on you. You feel stressed out and are afraid that you're going to blow your fuse if anyone messes with you. As you are cleaning one of the machines at work, the guy who has been giving you a hard time starts getting in your face. What do you do?

SITUATION 5. After graduating a year ago from a training program in office machine repair, you were hired by a large computer company for a one-year, temporary position (you get a salary but no benefits). In the time that you have worked for this company, you have received outstanding evaluations from your boss as well as eight letters of recommendation from pleased customers. During the year, five other temporary workers who were hired when you were have moved into permanent positions, and so you ask your boss whether there is a permanent position for you, too. He says that the company doesn't have any more openings and that you will have to leave. Because only one of the workers who was offered a permanent position is a person of color, you think that the situation involves racial discrimination. What do you think? What do you do?

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Strategies for Handling Conflict

As you consider these suggestions for handling conflict at work, remember that no single strategy is effective every time. You may have to try several strategies, depending on the situation at the moment. If you have other ideas for handling work conflict, add them to the list.

- Use time-outs. Walk away from the coworker who is making you angry, and wait for at least ten minutes.
- Whenever possible, delay your response until you and your boss or coworker are calmer.
- Avoid conflicts with coworkers before things get out of hand.
- Ask your supervisor to explain what is expected of you in advance, so that you will know where you stand.
- Talk with your friends or partner about what makes you angry on the job.
- Ask for help with difficult tasks *before* a problem arises.
- Prepare in advance how to deal with a difficult boss or coworker so that you will be ready to handle any situation that comes up.
- Keep stress low by taking care of yourself; get enough sleep, eat right, and exercise.
- Ask yourself what you like and what you dislike about your job so that you can avoid or handle situations that make you angry.
- Leave your job problems at work; don't let them interfere with your personal life.
- Make every effort to be reliable and productive at work so that you will feel good about your performance.

If a conflict arises that you cannot resolve, request a meeting with a third party, such as a mediator or supervisor, to help you and your coworker work things out.

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Feedback/Wrap-up

Ask the following questions to summarize the session and help the men express what they got out of it.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody like to tell us what he got out of today's session? (Follow up by asking whether the others want to add anything.)
2. Which of the strategies for handling conflict at work do you think will be helpful to you? Which of the strategies would not work for you? Why?
3. Did you learn anything today about job conflicts that will be useful in handling anger and conflict in your personal relationships? If so, what?
4. Based on your experiences, is it easier to control anger in your personal relationships or on the job? Why?
5. So far, we have focused on anger in personal relationships and anger in the workplace. What other situations come up where you could use some of the strategies we've discussed? (For example, how you are treated as a customer? How are you treated in your child support situation?)
6. What, if anything, do you still need to work on concerning the way you deal with anger or with conflict? (For example, do you need to learn to "walk away"? Do you need to be more assertive in stating your position? Do you need to learn how to take time-outs?)

Remind the men that it takes practice to control anger, especially when we don't like the person we are angry with. Point out that they now know some ways to deal with anger without having to lose their self-respect and without having to lose their job.

End the session by thanking the men for their participation. Tell them that the next session will help them to improve their work experiences by focusing on what is expected of them as workers, how to negotiate for what they need on the job, and their legal rights as employees.

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Surviving on the Job

Activity **14-1**	**What's New?**	☞ 10-15 minutes
Activity **14-2**	**Employers' and Workers' Expectations**	☞ 30-40 minutes
Activity **14-3**	**On-the-Job Negotiation**	☞ 40-50 minutes
Activity **14-4**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ 10-15 minutes

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Key Concepts

- A job is a contract that spells out the relationship between a worker and an employer. Understanding the employer's expectations is the key to maintaining a good job relationship.
- Keeping a job often depends on the ability to negotiate. Negotiation is the process of communicating back and forth for the purpose of reaching a joint decision.
- Employers need workers who are hardworking, responsible, and reliable. The better an employee's job record is, the more successful he will be in negotiating with his employer to satisfy his needs.

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Materials Checklist

Activity 14-2 Employers' and Workers' Expectations

- ❑ Newsprint
- ❑ Markers

Activity 14-3 On-the-Job Negotiation

- ❑ Leader Resource, "Elements of Negotiation"
- ❑ Newsprint
- ❑ Marker

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What's New?

Planning Note: Tailor the following questions so that you are asking about specific concepts, ideas, and skills that the participants reviewed in Session 13, "Handling Anger and Conflict on the Job." Focus on their reactions to the strategies for controlling anger in the workplace.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Can somebody please tell the group what we talked about in the last session?
2. Did you experience any conflicts at work since the last session? Were you able to use the strategies we discussed to control your anger? Which strategies? How did things go?
3. What about situations outside of work where you had to control your anger? What did you do in those situations?
4. Overall, what has been most helpful about our discussions of managing anger in personal relationships and on the job? What basic principles can you apply when you are angry?
5. How have our discussions changed the way you think about conflicts in your life? Have they changed how you respond to conflict and manage your anger? If so, how?

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Employers' and Workers' Expectations*

Purpose: To help participants understand the importance of good relationships between workers and employers. To recognize that good relationships start with clear expectations on both sides.

Materials: Newsprint and marker.

Time: 30-40 minutes.

Procedure: Begin by saying something like, "In the last session, we talked about how to handle anger and conflict on the job. We identified work situations in which anger caused problems, and then we examined strategies for controlling anger and avoiding explosive situations. Today we'll continue our discussion about work, focusing especially on ways to maximize the chances of having a good experience on the job."

Next, ask the men to think about a recent boss or supervisor and to imagine that they are in his or her shoes for a day. Tell them that this can be any boss they have had recently, whether on a one-day job or on a steady job. After everyone has identified such a boss or supervisor, tell the men to imagine being this person as he or she prepares to start the workday. Ask for two or three volunteers to describe how they imagine the boss's life, using the following questions.

*Adapted from Carol Hunter-Geboy, Pamela Wilson, and Kay Sherwood, *New Chance Life Skills and Opportunities Curriculum* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation and Public/Private Ventures, draft of August 19, 1992).

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▼ Discussion Questions

1. As the boss, what tasks must you complete today?
2. What do you need your workers or helpers to do in order to complete these tasks?
3. What sorts of problems do you anticipate? (Examples: workers not showing up on time; people not working efficiently; errors being made; etc.)
4. What will happen if you fail to complete the tasks? Do you have to answer to anyone? Who?

Continue the discussion with the whole group by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. What did it feel like to be in your boss's shoes?
2. What kinds of things have you done as a worker to help or hinder your boss's efforts to get the job done? (Examples: coming to work late or with a hangover; doing a sloppy job; working overtime; etc.)
3. How clearly has your boss explained what is expected of you?
4. What could your boss have done to improve the chances of getting the job done? (Examples: be clear about what is expected from workers; be more patient; etc.)
5. What did you like about your boss's style of supervising? What did you dislike?
6. How did most of your coworkers feel about this boss? Did they agree with your opinions?
7. What would you have done differently if you had been the boss?
8. To what extent did your relationship with your boss cause you to keep (or leave) this job?

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Now tell the men that you would like their reactions to the following statement (read it aloud, and post it on newsprint): "A job is a contract between an employer and a worker." Begin by asking the men to define "a contract." (If necessary, start them off with an example of a contract, such as a tenant's lease.) The definition may include:

- A verbal or written agreement
- A deal
- An exchange or trade
- A promise or commitment

Now tell the group to imagine making a contract with an employer for a job that they have been offered. Ask: "What are some of the terms — the specific conditions of the job — that you would want to have spelled out in your contract?" Their list should include:

- Hours/days of work
- Pay
- Benefits (vacation time, sick leave, health insurance, etc.)
- Opportunities for advancement and training
- Who the supervisor is
- What the job responsibilities are
- How employees are evaluated for pay raises
- Whether and how often drug screening is done
- Length of probationary period
- Dress code

When the lists have been compiled (consider posting them on newsprint), continue by asking the following questions.

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▼ Discussion Questions

1. Does a contract have to be written out? Is a verbal agreement a contract?
2. In what way do you think a contract can help you keep your job?
3. Would an employer want to spell out the same terms that you listed in your contract? What other things might an employer want to state in the contract?
4. What happens when a worker doesn't understand what the employer expects?
5. Have any of you had an agreement or contract with your boss? (Remember to include union contracts in this response.)
6. Have you found that a contract or a clear agreement usually makes things better for you at work? Does the boss usually stick to the agreement?
7. What can you do if the terms of the agreement or contract are not followed?
8. If things are not working out, what can you do to negotiate changes in your contract?

Tell the men that the next activity will give them practice in the art of negotiation in order to help them get what they need from their bosses.

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On-the-Job Negotiation

Purpose: To help participants learn to negotiate effectively for the things they need on the job.

Materials: Leader Resource, "Elements of Negotiation"; newsprint and marker.

Time: 40-50 minutes.

Planning Note: Copy the five steps of the Leader Resource "Elements of Negotiation" onto newsprint.

Procedure: Tell the men that this activity will sharpen their negotiation skills, which will help them to get what they need on the job. Say something like, "Getting things like time off, a change in work schedule, a raise, or even the supplies you need to do your job may be difficult at times — especially if you have to rely on a boss or supervisor who is unpleasant or is just too busy. Often, however, the *way* you ask for something can have a lot to do with the outcome. This activity will identify some effective ways to negotiate for what you need from your boss or employer. But first we're going to do a role play to demonstrate how the process of negotiation takes place in everyday life." Then ask for two men to volunteer to role-play the following vignette:

> Marcus and Stan have been overhauling Stan's '84 Mustang convertible for three months. They have rebuilt the engine, added a deluxe stereo and CD player with speakers, replaced the tires and hubcaps, and repainted the body. Stan originally paid $2,000 for the car, and he bought most of the parts at cost from a friend who works in an auto shop. He now wants to sell the car and hopes to get about $4,000. Marcus wants to buy it — but for only $3,000, because that's all the money he has.

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Divide the men into two groups. One group will select a member to play the character of Stan and will work with him to develop a list of reasons why Stan should keep his price at $4,000. The other group will select a member to play the character of Marcus and will help him develop a list of reasons why Stan should sell him the car for $3,000. Give the groups about 10 minutes to develop the arguments they plan to use in negotiating a fair price for the car.

After 10 minutes, reconvene the entire group. Tell the two volunteers who are playing Stan and Marcus that they have about 10 minutes to negotiate with each other; at the end of that time, they must settle on a price for the car.

After the role play, when the men have agreed on a price for the car, discuss the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. How well do you think Stan and Marcus did in negotiating a price for the car?
2. Which arguments seemed most reasonable?
3. Which arguments seemed unreasonable or off the point?
4. How willing was Stan to compromise and lower the price? How willing was Marcus to compromise and pay more?
5. How satisfied do you think Stan was with the final price? How satisfied do you think Marcus was?
6. What could either Stan or Marcus have done differently to improve his negotiating position? Did either man take a strategy that worked against him?

Tell the men that there is a model for negotiation that may improve their effectiveness as negotiators. Post the newsprint "Elements of Negotiation," and go through steps 1-5 with the group, explaining as needed (see the Leader Resource "Elements of Negotiation").

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After you have reviewed and explained the five steps, ask the men to analyze the role play between Stan and Marcus in terms of the model on the newsprint. For example:

Stan and Marcus Negotiate

1. **State your position.**

   (Stan wanted $4,000 for the car; Marcus wanted to pay $3,000.)

2. **Communicate the *reason* for your needs/interests.**

   (Stan needs to cover the cost of the parts, labor, and equipment; he also wants to make a profit. Marcus has only $3,000 to spend; he knows how much Stan paid to fix up the car; he wants to deduct money for his time and labor in rebuilding the car.)

3. **What is important to you?**

   (Marcus and Stan are friends; the '84 Mustang is a special car; both men feel that their efforts should be rewarded, etc.)

4. **What are your bargaining chips?**

   (Marcus may agree to a higher price if he can pay it off slowly; Stan may give Marcus a break if he buys the car without the stereo or hubcaps; etc.)

5. **Outcome.**

   (What price did Stan and Marcus agree on?)

Now ask each man to think about a work situation in which he had to ask his boss or supervisor for something he needed either personally or to do his job. Record their responses on newsprint. (The list might include time off, a change in schedule, a promotion, a pay raise, a new supervisor, needed tools or equipment, additional staff, etc.)

After everyone has stated at least one need, tell the men that now they are going to practice negotiating with a boss to get something they need. Have them divide into groups of three; in each group one man should volunteer to be the boss, another to be the employee, and the third to be an observer. Instruct the small groups to select a situation from the list you just developed (or, if they would like, to create a new situation where a worker is attempting to negotiate with his boss for something he

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needs). When all groups have identified a situation, tell them to review the five steps outlined on newsprint ("Elements of Negotiation") and then to spend about five minutes using those steps in a negotiation.

After about five minutes, instruct the observer in each small group to evaluate how well each of the two negotiators used the five steps in reaching their outcomes. Then ask for one or two of the small groups to role-play their situation for the entire group. After each role play, ask first the observer and then the entire group to critique how well the actors negotiated.

Discuss the role plays by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. For those of you who played employees, how did you feel about your ability to negotiate with your boss?
2. For those of you who played the boss, how did that feel?
3. For those of you who played observers, how well did the boss and the employee use the five steps in negotiating?
4. In general, how willing were the characters to make compromises?
5. How helpful was it to use the five-step model for effective negotiation?
6. In general, what do you think influenced the outcomes of these role plays?
7. How helpful is it in negotiating to separate the person from the problem or need? (For example, when you need something from your boss, how do your feelings about him or her affect your request? How do your boss's feelings about you affect your request?)
8. How much does your prior work record influence your ability to ask for and get things? (For example, if you know that you've been a responsible employee, do you feel more confident about asking for things?)
9. What happens when you feel that your request was denied because the boss just doesn't like you? What can you do in this situation?

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Leader Resource

Elements of Negotiation

Negotiation is the process of communicating back and forth for the purpose of reaching a joint decision.

1. **State your position.**
   (What are your demands, preferences, or needs?)
2. **Communicate the *reason* for your needs/interests.**
   (What are your supportive arguments? What are your rights? For example, "I have accrued a day's vacation and therefore would like Friday off.")
3. **What is important to you?**
   (What are the values or principles at stake? For example, hard work should be rewarded.)
4. **What are your bargaining chips?**
   (What are you willing to compromise, trade, give up?)
5. **Outcome.**
   (Agreed upon by both parties.)

Points to Keep in Mind

- Separate the *people* from the *problem*. (Your personal relationship or opinion of your boss should have nothing to do with what you need from him/her. Your needs are based on what you are entitled to as a worker.)
- Invent *options* for mutual gain. (What can both parties get out of the negotiation? For example, your boss wants you to do good work and be responsible; you want your boss to be flexible and understanding.)
- Use criteria based on *objective* facts. (What are fair standards and fair procedures? My contract says that I am entitled to sick days, time off, etc.)

Adapted from Roger Fisher and William Ury of the Harvard Negotiation Project, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981).

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Feedback/Wrap-up

Summarize and discuss today's session by asking the following questions.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would somebody like to tell the group what he got out of today's session?
2. Has anything we talked about today changed the way you view working? What about the way you think about a boss or employer? What has changed?
3. Does anyone plan to use the five steps in negotiation that we discussed today? If so, how will you use them?
4. What, if anything, did you learn today that will help you keep your job when things are rough? What new approach did you learn?

Remind the men that this and other sessions have offered strategies to help them keep their jobs so that they can provide for themselves and their children. State that the next session will focus on issues relating to race, including how race affects people's personal lives and their opportunities to work and take care of their children. Ask each man to think about where he stands on the issue of race — and particularly about what he tells his children and what his behavior shows his children about where he stands.

Remind the men of when the next session will meet, and thank them for their participation.

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The Issue of Race/Racism

Part I

Activity **15-1**	**What's New?**	☞ 10-15 minutes
Activity **15-2**	**The Stereotype Game**	
	or	
Activity **15-3**	Debate: **Is It Real or a Stereotype?**	☞ 60-90 minutes
	Optional Activity:	
Activity **15-4**	**Looking In**	☞ 60-90 minutes
Activity **15-5**	**Feedback/Wrap-up**	☞ 20-30 minutes

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Key Concepts

- A *stereotype* is the belief that everyone who belongs to a particular group will think and act alike. Stereotypes do not allow for individuality; they can lead people to judge others without knowing anything about them.
- Some men believe the negative stereotypes about themselves. This leads to low self-esteem and to the repetition of negative behaviors.
- The acceptance of stereotypes about gender roles and ethnic groups can cause conflict in relationships and can lead to self-destructive behavior.
- Men and women should not be limited to certain roles and careers on the basis of gender, race, national origin, or family background. Today men and women are changing how they view gender roles and are sharing more responsibility for child care and wage earning.

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Materials Checklist

Activity 15-2 The Stereotype Game

- ❑ Handout, "Definitions"
- ❑ Leader Resource, "Common Elements of Oppression"
- ❑ Newsprint
- ❑ Four markers
- ❑ Index cards (optional)

Activity 15-3 Is It Real or a Stereotype?

- ❑ Handouts, "Definitions" and "Is It a Stereotype?"
- ❑ Newsprint
- ❑ Marker
- ❑ Pencils (for everyone)

Activity 15-4 Looking In

- ❑ A large mirror or individual handheld mirrors

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Planning Note: "The Issue of Race/Racism" is intended to be conducted in two parts, over three weeks. Part I (week 1) introduces the concepts of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination as well as explores the negative consequences of stereotyping, particularly as it relates to gender, race, and ethnicity. Part II (weeks 2 and 3; see page 23) identifies strategies for helping children to deal with racism and ends with quotations that illustrate ways in which a variety of people have taken a stand on the issue of race/racism.

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What's New?

Planning Note: Tailor the discussion questions so that you are asking the men about specific ideas, concepts, and skills reviewed in Session 14.

▼ Discussion Questions

1. Would someone like to remind the group of what we discussed in the last session?
2. Did any of you think this week about difficult work situations that might have turned out better if you had used the negotiating skills we practiced in the last session?
3. Did any of you have an experience this week in which you had to negotiate for something you needed? Did you use the steps in negotiation that we identified last time? How did it go?
4. What part of last week's session about how to survive on the job had the greatest impact on you? Why?

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The Stereotype Game

Purpose: To introduce participants to the concepts of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. To identify the negative consequences of stereotyping. To encourage participants to reject stereotypes.

Materials: Handout, "Definitions"; Leader Resource, "Common Elements of Oppression"; newsprint and markers; index cards (optional).

Time: 60-90 minutes.

Planning Note: When you choose categories or groups for this activity, start with groups that the participants are likely to identify with but that are not racial groups. After you have helped the men understand what stereotypes are and how they develop, you can then decide whether to go to a deeper level of discussion by exploring stereotypes about particular racial groups.

You will divide the men into four groups in this activity. If you use racial or ethnic groups, choose two or more (to avoid singling out one group). Also, be specific in describing any Latino group; it is better to specify Chicano, Puerto Rican, Mexican, or Salvadoran than to use a broad group like Hispanic or Latino. If most of the participants are members of one racial group and only one or two fathers are from another, avoid using race as a category.

Also, be aware that racial and ethnic categories require ample time to work through the men's deep feelings about such issues. Part II of Session 15 will allow for additional time to discuss "The Issue of Race/Racism" in greater detail. Be sure to read through the entire session before you begin any of the activities.

Read the Leader Resource "Common Elements of Oppression" as background information for this activity.

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